

October 13, 2010

(Waco, Texas) – U.S. Representative Chet Edwards today said the expected announcement Friday that the Social Security Administration will not be increasing the cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) for Social Security recipients in 2011 requires Congress to act to protect seniors. The marks the second year in a row that seniors have not received a COLA update for Social Security. Edwards has cosponsored legislation, H.R. 5987, the Seniors Protection Act to provide a \$250 payment to 54 million Americans who rely on Social Security including 118,084 in District 17.

**Congressman Edwards said,** *“Monthly expenses for prescription drugs, medical costs, and utilities continue to rise for seniors and their Social Security benefits should keep up. There is no reason an increased burden should fall on seniors and people with disabilities, especially during tough economic times. I have helped pass into law a \$250 payment for seniors this year and we should continue that policy until Social Security cost-of-living-adjustments are updated.*

In 2009, Edwards helped pass into law a one-time \$250 payment to Social Security recipients to assist seniors living on fixed incomes. Edwards has also supported House passage of legislation that would freeze Medicare Part B premium increases to prevent seniors from taking on additional financial burdens during tough economic times especially since there was no Social Security cost-of-living increase this year. After passing the House, the legislation freezing Medicare Part B premiums stalled in the Senate.

Social Security was the primary source of income for 64 percent of retirees who got benefits in 2008, according to the Social Security Administration. A third relied on Social Security for at least 90 percent of their income. The cost-of-living adjustments, or COLAs, are automatically set each year by an inflation measure that was adopted by Congress back in the 1970s. Based on inflation so far this year, the trustees who oversee Social Security project there will be no COLA for 2011.

**Edwards concluded**, *“Congress should address the COLA issue as soon as we return in November. Seniors are the foundation of our communities and protecting their retirement security and the guaranteed benefits of Social Security should be one of our highest priorities. The fact is that while other retirement savings lost an average of 32% of their value during the recession, Social Security continued to provide a reliable income for our seniors. We need to make sure it stays that way.”*